

Corps Connection

ALABAMA
citizen★corps

A Monthly Publication for Alabama Citizen Corps Councils, their Partners and Affiliates

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Alabama Citizen Corps is a program of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

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Bob Riley, Governor

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3rd Annual Alabama Citizen Corps Conference, “Citizen Preparedness: Building Resistant and Resilient Communities”

The Grand Hotel Marriott Resort in Point Clear was the setting for the 3rd Annual Alabama Citizen Corps Conference entitled, “Citizen Preparedness: Building Resistant and Resilient Communities” on December 13th-14th. Over 150 attendees from around the state represented local government, community organizations, volunteers, faith-based groups, and disaster response units. Speakers included federal officials and national and state professionals in panel discussions and breakout workshops.

Andrew T. Mitchell from the Office of Domestic Preparedness at the US Department of Homeland Security opened the conference by speaking on “The Importance of Preparedness in America”. In his speech, Mr. Mitchell focused on the unique response of states based on varying disaster risks associated with regional make-up. He spoke on the importance of the federal government empowering state and local agencies to develop their own disaster response plan. Following Mr. Mitchell's address, a Citizen Corps Panel, provided attendees with a brief but concrete synopsis of the five different programs of Citizen Corps: Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), Neighborhood Watch, Fire Corps, and Medical Reserve



Andrew T. Mitchell speaks on the importance of community involvement and preparedness.

Corps (MRC). The panel included Kristin McSwain, the new federal Director for AmeriCorps State and National programs. AmeriCorps and Citizen Corps are recognized as the citizen volunteer programs under USA Freedom Corps. After the program overviews, attendees engaged in a question and answer session with the program representatives. During lunch, Sydney Hoffman, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GFBCI), spoke on Citizen Corps in Alabama showcasing National Preparedness Month and its events. The first day concluded with dinner and an address by Jim Walker, Director of Alabama Department of Homeland Security, entitled, "The State of Preparedness in Alabama." Mr. Walker enthusiastically encouraged the crowd to make the most out of each day by serving each other and creating a safer and stronger Alabama.



Breakout groups work together to address challenges faced by Citizen Corps Councils on the ground.

Day two began with Bruce Baughman, Director of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, speaking on volunteers in disasters and the importance of their utilization. Irene Collins, Director of Alabama Department of Senior Services, followed Mr.



Jim Walker delivers his speech on the State of Preparedness in Alabama during dinner.

Baughman in discussing senior citizen inclusion in disaster planning and response activities. Ken Skalitzy, the Voluntary Agency Liaison for FEMA Region IV, gave the keynote address during lunch entitled, "Collaborating with Volunteer Organizations".

The conference closed with the second Citizen Corps panel highlighting best practices. Joe Davis, Assistant Director of the Alabama Department of Homeland Security, moderated this panel comprised of national professionals honored for their service to the Citizen Corps programs. The panel focused on member recruitment, managing unaffiliated volunteers, training, programming, volunteer

retention, and community organization.

Exhibitors hosted displays during the conference included AmeriCorps, CERT, Citizen Corps, SouthernLinc, Sunbelt Fire and the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Thank you to all the attendees and councils that participated in discussions and sharing of knowledge during the two days in Point Clear.

If you were not able to attend the conference, be sure to check our website for pictures and postings of the presentations you missed. Hope to see you all again next year.

<http://www.ServeAlabama.gov/CitizenCorpsConferencePP.htm>



Alabama, are YOU ready?

At the core of the recently released *Be Ready* Public Awareness Campaign, the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GFBCI) strives to inspire students, families, businesses, and schools to make personal preparedness a priority. The public service announcements (PSAs), movie slides, and billboards, shown across Alabama, will remind individuals, families, and communities of the need to prepare locally for any kind of disaster.

PSAs ran throughout the holiday season encouraging Alabamians to give "The Gift of Preparedness." These PSAs encourage individuals to create a three-day *Ready* kit, make an emergency plan, and learn more about disasters that are pertinent to their area. To view the PSA, visit www.ReadyAlabama.org.

In theaters throughout the state, including Huntsville, Birmingham, and Mobile, moviegoers are being encouraged to prepare for disasters. The next time you take a night out at the movies, make sure to look for the *Be Ready* clips.

This spring watch for billboards across the state delivering the message "Be Informed, Be Involved, Be Ready." Please help spread this message to your colleagues and friends. But most importantly, go home and make sure that **you** are prepared for any kind of disaster. Please contact the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives if your council is interested in developing a local *Be Ready* Campaign.



www.ReadyAlabama.org



BE INFORMED



BE INVOLVED



BE READY

Start the New Year Right
Mark your 2007 calendars with these
exciting events and opportunities!



Various Martin Luther King (MLK) Events in Birmingham, AL

Each year, the Alabama AmeriCorps State programs commemorate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, "A Day On, Not a Day Off," by participating in service projects across the state. On January 15, 2007, Alabama's AmeriCorps State programs, Birmingham READS, Child Care Resource Center, Tri-County AmeriCorps, Lanett HOPE AmeriCorps and the AmeriCorps HIPPO program, are partnering with the Hands on Network, Hands on Birmingham and AmeriCorps Alums for a city wide community service project in Birmingham, Alabama. There will be approximately 54 individual projects that day in the Birmingham area. Approximately 125 AmeriCorps State members will serve on a single school makeover/restoration project. The goal for 2007 is to have 1500 volunteers engaged in projects in the city of Birmingham and surrounding towns. At the end of the day, all of the volunteers will convene at the Boutwell Auditorium for a volunteer recognition and celebration. If your council or community would like more information about planning or participating in your local MLK Day service activities, please contact James.Mullins@ServeAlabama.gov.

Public Safety Preparedness Day in Montgomery, AL

Montgomery Emergency Management Agency plans to have a Public Safety Preparedness Day on February 17th, 2007 located at Eastdale Mall on the Atlanta Highway. This is an annual event in which the Citizen Corps and CERT program are highlighted. The Montgomery EMA CERT coordinator will hand out Citizen Corps and CERT materials to the public. Several agencies such as the fire department, police, sheriff, Red Cross, and others will have tables there as well. Freddie the Fire Truck and the local media will make appearances throughout the day. For more information on this exciting event check out the Montgomery EMA's website at <http://www.montgomeryal.gov/depts/ema.aspx> for future updates and information.

Share Your Great Ideas.

The Alabama Citizen Corps Council is looking for articles, pictures, updates, lessons learned, tips, useful websites and events for the monthly newsletter. Please send any information on Citizen Corps, CERT, Volunteers in Police Service, Neighborhood Watch, Medical Reserve Corps, Fire Corps, or anything else of interest to Citizen Corps Councils to: Alison.Welty@ServeAlabama.gov. Submissions are due by the 15th of each month to be published in the following month's newsletter, space permitting.

Tip of the Month

With winds speeds increasing and temperatures dropping, it's very important to be prepared for severe storms of all types. Follow these tips to ensure that you and your family stay comfortable and safe.

- * Watch the local news weather alerts for freezing temperatures and approaching storms.
- * Allow water to run from the faucets of your sinks and showers to prevent the pipes from freezing.
- * Make sure to have extra batteries for flashlights on hand in case the storm knocks out the power.
- * Stock up on extra necessities to keep your family healthy and safe if the bad weather prohibits outdoor travel.
- * Use extreme caution when navigating through bad weather and be sure to keep extra supplies in the trunk of the car should something go wrong.



Send Us Your Feedback!

Have suggestions or ideas for topics? Please send them to Ruth Smith at

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